



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

Dear ESL Program Director:

The Adult ESL Explicit Literacy Impact Study, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, is a groundbreaking study designed to test the effect of a high quality, innovative curriculum on the English literacy and language development of low-literate adult ESL learners. The study is being conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), Lewin Group, Berkeley Policy Associates (BPA), and Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

These organizations are currently in the process of identifying 10 programs, nationwide, that are eligible to participate in this exciting opportunity during the fall term of 2007 and the winter term of 2008. In each program, approximately 3 teachers will receive free state-of-the-art training on the implementation of the curriculum, as well as ongoing support throughout the study. In addition, all training and curriculum materials will be provided at no cost to the program.

The explicit literacy curriculum is being developed by distinguished experts in ESL instruction and explicit literacy, including Dr. Heide Spruck-Wrigley who is leading the development. The resulting curriculum will reflect principles of adult learning and explicit literacy, and will be tailored to meet the needs of low-literacy ESL learners.

I have attached an overview of the study, which will provide you with more details. After you have had a chance to review this information, my colleagues at AIR and Lewin Group would be interested in having a conversation with you or other appropriate staff to discuss your program's potential participation in the study. This study will provide invaluable information to help states and local agencies improve adult ESL practice, and if your program is eligible, we hope that we can count on your support.

Within the next few weeks, a member of AIR's research team will call you to discuss your program's potential eligibility during the study period, and to assess your interest in participation. The study design requires each adult ESL program to have: (a) at least 4 classes with a total of 90 low-literate adult ESL students per semester (or equivalent academic term) and at least 8 hours of instruction per week; (b) a managed enrollment system; and (c) a record of good student retention in a given term. Moreover, it requires that programs do not offer, and have no plans to offer, explicit literacy instruction to the target student population.

If you need further information, please contact the project director, Dr. Larry Condelli, at 202-403-5331 or by e-mail at lcondelli@air.org. Thanks in advance for your continued cooperation with AIR staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cheryl Keenan" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cheryl Keenan, Director
Division of Adult Education and Literacy